

European Academy of Paediatrics Research in Ambulatory Setting network (EAPRASnet): a multi-national general paediatric research network for better child health

S. del Torso,* D. van Esso,† A. Gerber,‡ A. Drabik,§ A. Hadjipanayis,¶ A. Nicholson** and Z. Grossman††

*ULSS 16, Padova, Italy

†Primary Care Center 'Pare Claret', Barcelona, Spain

‡Institut für Qualität und Wirtschaftlichkeit im Gesundheitswesen IQWiG

§Institut für Gesundheitsökonomie und klinische Epidemiologie IGKE, Cologne, Germany

¶Paediatric Department, Larnaca General Hospital, Larnaca, Cyprus

**Children's University Hospital, Dublin, Ireland, and

††Maccabi Health Services Department – Pediatric Clinic, Tel Aviv, Israel

Accepted for publication 3 January 2010

Abstract

Background In 2008, the European Academy of Paediatrics launched a paediatric-based research network – EAPRASnet (European Academy of Paediatrics Research in Ambulatory Setting network). The network has recruited primary care and general paediatricians from European and Mediterranean countries.

Methods Every paediatrician joining the network has been asked to complete a recruitment survey. The aims of the survey were to characterize paediatrician's demographics, practice arrangements and patient's demographics, to define main incentives for research, and to learn what paediatricians view as unsolved issues that need to be studied.

Results A total of 156 paediatricians from 19 countries were recruited with 144 completing the questionnaire (92%). Majority of respondents (89%) were general paediatricians for more than half of their time. Practice arrangement of 47% of paediatricians was solo practice, with 40% in group practice. Electronic medical records were being used by 72% of respondents. Over 70% of the paediatricians had more than 1000 patients under their clinical care, and patients younger than 6 years old contributed nearly half of the patient population. Areas of most interest for research were: quality of care indicators, communication with parents, obesity, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and effective well child care. Main incentives for participation in a research project were interest in the topic (81%) and effort to improve quality of care (71%). Lack of time was the leading reported obstacle for research activity (72%). EAPRASnet is growing, and the network's structure, operation and funding are described. Methods for joining the network and the process of study development are presented.

Conclusion A core group of EAP general paediatricians are committed to research in their practices. The information gathered will serve for future planning of research projects in the EAPRASnet to harmonize and optimize the care given to children in the primary care setting in Europe.

Keywords

health professionals, paediatricians, primary care, quality improvement, service evaluation, service organization